

et al.: Front Matter

# SYRACUSE

UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

VOL. 1, NO. 3

JULY 1985

**A Student in Spain**  
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## THE FRESHMAN EXPERIENCE

A look at the critical first  
year of college  
**Page 10**



## Breaking Family Ties

Those words are the title of one of Norman Rockwell's most poignant and touching paintings, which appeared on the cover of the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1954. It depicts a young man and his father waiting for a train at a whistle-stop in some place like Kansas.

They are seated side by side on the running board of the family pickup truck, each deep in his own thoughts. The father leans forward, elbows on his knees, fingering the brim of his farmer's hat. His tanned face and faded clothing identify him instantly as a man who has known both work and care.

The son, in contrast, sits bolt upright, his thoughts on the coming journey. Ignoring the dog whose head rests on his knee, he gazes over his father's hunched shoulders for a first glimpse of the train. He is dressed in what is obviously his best—and probably only—suit, but his appearance is not one of tailored elegance. His necktie is grotesquely loud, his collar too loose, and his red-and-white argyle socks peek out between his too-brown shoes and the oversized cuffs on his trousers.

If the young man is aware of his sartorial shortcomings, his face does not betray it; his expression combines pride, excitement, anxiety, and a rather tenuous detachment.

What is the reason for all this emotion? The answer is evident in the stack of books balanced atop his wooden suitcase and the "State U" pennant affixed to its end: He is going away to college.

Just one year before this painting appeared on the *Post* cover, I too went away to college, breaking the family ties that had sustained me for 18 years. Although I am still reluctant to admit that my emotions were as transparent as those of Rockwell's young man, I remember them with painful clarity: the conviction that I was, finally and actually, undertaking something significant; my nervousness about whether I could carry it off; and the sobering realization that, however it worked out, my life would ever after be changed.

That was more than 30 years ago. Today, my own son is preparing to leave for college in circumstances very different from Rockwell's young man—and from my own. I actually set off wearing a suit; he will go in jeans and a T-shirt. My father was, in fact,

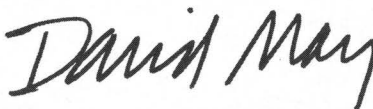
a farmer; his is the editor of this magazine. I was the first in my family to go to college; he has grown up on college campuses, and both his parents hold degrees.

Despite those years and differences, when my son looks at Norman Rockwell's painting he recognizes a familiar scene. He knows that he is undertaking that very same journey, and he sees reflected in that young man's face his own emotions.

For my part, I am now more attuned to the emotions of the parent. Like the puzzled father in Rockwell's painting—and, I suppose, like my own father—I feel a curious mixture of pride and resignation, of acceptance and regret. In more important ways than the simple financial one, I recognize that my son is cashing in my 17-year investment in him, and that he will spend it, as he should, for his own purposes.

Over the years, more than 100,000 young people have left home to begin their freshman year at Syracuse. Last September, another 3,000 were added to that number, and for the past nine months writer Alix Mitchell has talked with many of them to find out what their first year was like and how they felt about it. She also drew on her own experiences, and those of her colleagues and our parents and children and friends.

Alix's story about the freshman year begins on page 10. More than any other story we have published, it has become a shared experience for all the members of the magazine staff. We are eager to share it now with our readers, for it is the story of all of us at a critical and vulnerable moment in our lives.



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Editor

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### Photographs

All photos by SU Photo Center except: Vern D. Brand, 7 (top); Hillary Cohen, 18-23, front cover; Joe McNally, 27 (top); Steve Parker, 31; Susan Steinkamp/*Syracuse Herald American*, 26 (top); *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 28 (bottom).

# SYRACUSE

## UNIVERSITY MAGAZINE

**2 Perspectives.** Through the Community Internship Program, senior Holly Himmelfarb had a chance to work behind the cameras of WGRZ-TV in Buffalo, N.Y.

**3 University.** More than 5,100 degree recipients celebrated their achievements at Commencement '85. Also, a new vice chancellor for academic affairs has been named, and a mountain of new computer equipment is on its way to Syracuse.

**10 The Freshman Experience.** In one year's time, high school seniors grow into young adults and full-fledged college students. Writer Alix Mitchell investigates the emotional and intellectual journey that is the freshman year.

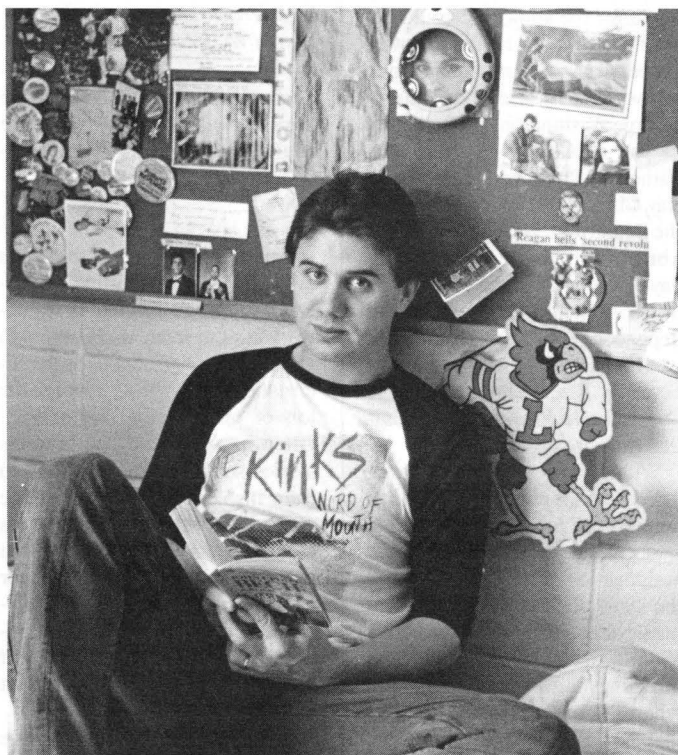
**18 A Student in Spain.** Senior Hillary Cohen describes, in words and pictures, her semester abroad in Madrid.



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**26 SU's Who.** Among 1985 degree recipients were a Ph.D. grandmother, a mother-and-son pair of undergraduates, and a rare "triple engineer."

**30 Sports Journal.** Tennis coach Jesse Dwire has an ambitious goal for his players: He wants them to have a good time.



WOMEN'S TENNIS, PAGE 30

**32 The Last Word.** Alumna Lillie Kinney remembers William Park Hotchkiss, for whom classroom lecturing was just the beginning of an education.

### On the Cover

This classic shot of Toledo, Spain, comes not from *National Geographic*, but from Syracuse student Hillary Cohen, who spent a spring semester in Spain as part of SU's study abroad program. Hillary's account of that experience—and more of her photos—are featured on pages 18-23.